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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/681,155	10/09/2003	Teruo Ouchi	P23954	6427
7055	7590	11/15/2004	EXAMINER	
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C. 1950 ROLAND CLARKE PLACE RESTON, VA 20191			FLANAGAN, BEVERLY MEINDL	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3739	

DATE MAILED: 11/15/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/681,155	OUCHI, TERUO	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Beverly M. Flanagan	3739	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

**A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.**

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

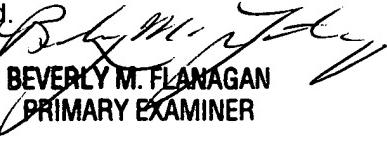
**Application Papers**

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
    1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
    3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.



BEVERLY M. FLANAGAN  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/9/04.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: \_\_\_\_.

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Priority***

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

***Information Disclosure Statement***

The information disclosure statement filed January 9, 2004 has been made of record and the references cited therein have been considered by the examiner.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, lines 11-13, the phrase "the flexible insertion portion" is recited twice. For examination purpose, it was assumed that applicant intended to recite "the outer sheath" in place of the second recitation of "the flexible insertion portion." As claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1, they are likewise rejected.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,257,617).

**In regard to claims 1 and 2,** Takahashi teaches a sheath 20 for removable placement over the insert part 10 of an endoscope where the endoscope has a U-shaped groove 11 and the sheath 20 is comprised of a tubular member 21, a transparent distal end cover 22 and a channel tube 30 that is secured to the distal end cover 22 (see Figure1 and col. 3, lines 60-65). Figure 1 shows that channel tube 30 passes through the U-shaped groove 11. Grooves 41 and 42 are formed on the distal end part 13 of the insert part 10 and click pawls 43 and 44 are forms on the distal end cover 22 that engage to restrict the insert tube 10 from escaping from the tubular member 21 (see Figure 2). Figures 1 and 2 show that there is a channel deformation space for allowing part of the distal end of channel tube 30 to be elastically deformed when the distal end part 13 of the endoscope is rotated about an axis. Furthermore, although Takahashi contemplates pinching distal end cover 22 to disengage click pawls 43 and 44 from grooves 41 and 42, the endoscope and sheath of Takahashi are capable of being disengaged by rotating the distal end cover 22, since the clock pawls 43 and 44 are elastically deformable (see col. 4, lines 37-45). **In regard to claim 3,** Figure 2 shows that grooves 41 and 42 are L-shaped and formed in an outer face of the

distal end part 13 and click pawls 43 and 44 are formed on an inner face of the distal end cover 22.

### ***Conclusion***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Applicant should note the following prior art references disclosing attachment mechanisms for the distal end part of sheaths for endoscopes: Chikama, U.S. Patent No. 5,154,164; Yasui et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,725,477; Iida, U.S. Patent No. 5,674,181; and Iida, U.S. Patent No. 5,662,588.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Beverly M. Flanagan whose telephone number is (703) 305-7202. The examiner can normally be reached on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C.M. Dvorak can be reached on (703) 308-0994. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 3739

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Beverly M. Flanagan  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3739

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